

2002 Legislative Mailing Restrictions

I will attempt to keep you informed of the issues mentioned in this mailer and others that come before the 2002 Legislature. Unfortunately, due to state law, the ability of legislators to communicate with the people we represent is severely limited during an election year.

I am allowed to respond to ALL specific, written requests from the citizens of the 18th District. If you would like to be updated on the happenings in the Legislature, please send a letter or E-mail to my office regarding your interest.

Thanks, and I hope to hear from you soon

Tom

Rep. Tom Mielke

PO Box 40600

Olympia, Wash 98504

1-800-562-6000

E-mail: mielke_th@leg.wa.gov

Join Me for a Town Hall Gathering

I would like to talk with you regarding the issues before the Legislature. Please join me on Saturday, February 23 for a brief presentation followed by a question and answer session. If you are unable to attend, but would like to comment on the budget or any other issues, please call me at 1-800-562-6000 or e-mail mielke_th@leg.wa.gov

Sincerely,


Tom Mielke

Join Me on Saturday, Feb. 23

10 - 11:30 a.m.

Kelso

Kelso Fire District 2

701 Vine

12:30 - 2 p.m.

Battle Ground

Maple Grove Middle School

12500 NE 199th St.

3 - 4:30 p.m.

Washougal

Washougal PUD

89 "C" Street

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Tom Mielke

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*Report to the
18th District - 2002*



*Report to the
18th District - 2002*

*Representative
Tom Mielke*

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Committees:

Local Government & Housing
Financial Institutions &
Insurance
Transportation

Dear Friend,

As the 2002 session began in January, the Legislature was faced with a \$1.2 billion budget shortfall. Unfortunately, some lawmakers have blamed this deficit on the terrorist attacks of September 11.

While tragic and horrifying, 9-11 is not solely responsible for our state's current economic condition. Those of us who have been paying attention over the past five years noticed a trend of this state not living within its means. In June, the Legislature approved a 2001-03 budget that spent \$650 million more than projected revenue. I did not vote for this budget as it was unsustainable and could only leave the Legislature with two options: raise taxes or cut services.

Just a few short weeks ago, Gov. Gary Locke announced his solution to the deficit and again, I wasn't too surprised to see his suggestions of guess what - raising taxes and cutting services. He has proposed cutting services to the most vulnerable in Washington and setting criminals free while guaranteeing pay raises for state employees. That's plain unacceptable.

The governor's transportation tax hike also doesn't meet muster. Your state leaders must roll up their sleeves, work together and lead this state toward economic recovery. I have made this commitment and hope my colleagues will join me.

If you have any questions or would like more information on the 2002 Legislature, please call or e-mail my office. And, I look forward to talking with you at our Town Hall Meeting in February.

Sincerely,


Rep. Tom Mielke

18th District Day

Join us for a firsthand view of the Legislature in action! Visitors will spend the day touring the Capitol campus and have lunch with Legislators.

Feb. 18 - 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
To RSVP call (360) 786-7850

Inside:

Budget 2002

Transportation
Update

Lynx Hoax?

Town Hall Schedule

Spotlight on the 2002 Budget: Protecting Washington's Citizens

We must control state government spending to make up a \$1.2 billion shortfall in the current budget. In June, the Legislature approved a 2001-03 budget that spent \$650 million more than projected revenue. Combined with a declining economy, this budget could only produce two solutions in 2001-03: tax increases or program cuts. I voted against that budget, as I considered it unsustainable and irresponsible.

Then came September 11. In addition to the tragic human sacrifice, the nations economic fallout further complicated this state's budget shortfall, leaving Washington close to \$1.2 billion in the red. Now it's January and Gov. Gary Locke is proposing raising taxes and cutting programs.

His budget proposal hurts schools, the elderly and poor the most while softening penalties for criminals.

Some details include

- **Reducing funding for K-12 education by \$29 million**, including a \$14 million cut in block grants – discretionary money used by schools for what local officials deem to be the greatest need
- **Cuts in human services of \$235 million**, including eliminating state assistance for disabled citizens
- **\$35 million cut from nursing homes**
- **\$34 million reduction in funding to pharmacists who provide prescription drugs** to low-income families and citizens on Medicaid.

He cuts all these vital programs that protect our state's most vulnerable while guaranteeing a pay raise for state employees and shortening jail time for drug and property crimes.

To raise revenue, the governor suggests expanding gambling opportunities in our state. By increasing gambling opportunities in Washington, we are only creating more victims.

Contrary to the governor's proposal, I believe we must find ways to cut bureaucracy, safeguard the citizens that truly need help, work for a stronger economy, produce and protect jobs. These will be my priorities in 2002.



Transportation: Moving People & Products

All we need to do is take a look around to see the problems we have with transportation. The state has spent millions of dollars on roads and transit. What about the average driver who just wants to get to work, pick up their children and maybe stop by the store and pick up a gallon of milk? Buses and car pools, while beneficial for some, just don't work for the vast majority of Washington's citizens.

The governor wants to maintain this cycle. He still wants more of your money without working to change the way this state does the business of moving citizens and goods.

There is no debating that Washington needs continued funding for congestion relief. However, the governor's latest proposal is, essentially, nearly identical to the plan which failed to pass last year. This plan **does not protect taxpayers.**

The governor is also still insisting the vote be taken by the Legislature, not by the people of the state. Hundreds, if not thousands, of calls, letters and e-mails were sent to my office last year, reminding me **the public wants the final say in any new taxes.**

And, Gov. Gary Locke is now threatening that any member of the Legislature that refuses to vote for his plan will not have the roads in their district fixed. I don't believe in threatening the people in Washington. I still believe in freedom of thought and speech. Just because the governor's opinion differs from many taxpayer's opinion, he was still elected to lead the entire state.

The governor's statewide tax increase proposal includes:

- An incremental 9-cent gas tax hike
- 1.5 percent sales tax on new and used vehicles
- 20 percent gross weight surcharge on trucks
- A gross weight fee on motor homes



Lynx Hoax Wounds Public Trust: We Deserve Answers

If proven, unlawful acts by state and federal employees should not go unpunished. That's why I strongly encourage and support a full federal investigation into allegations that two employees of the state Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) planted false samples of Canadian lynx hair in an apparent effort to establish the presence of the endangered animal in the Gifford Pinchot, Wenatchee and Snoqualmie national forests.

Three U.S. Forest Service employees and two U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials allegedly joined the DFW employees in falsifying the samples. The investigation must also determine their involvement and assess the appropriate penalties.

For local governments, businesses and landowners in Southwest Washington, rules and regulations imposed by state and national environmental authorities have been extremely costly. As a state legislator, one of my main goals has been to find an adequate and suitable balance between protecting the environment and allowing private citizens to maintain their livelihood.

I, along with a number of my colleagues, have called for a full investigation into this blatant violation of the public's trust. We must figure out how this hoax was perpetrated, who knew about it and when. Did supervisors simply sweep this under the rug? And, have similar situations happened in other studies?

The public deserves answers. These taxpayer-funded programs and the employees who make what can be extremely costly decisions for landowners must be held accountable for their actions.



Mary Root of Battle Ground served as a page for Rep. Tom Mielke, R-Battle Ground in 2001.

Young people between the ages of 14 and 17 from across the state are eligible to come to Olympia to serve as legislative pages. They work at The Capitol, live with host families and spend two hours each day of their week-long experience in a classroom setting learning about the legislative process.

Unfortunately, we are limited in the number of pages each lawmaker is allowed to sponsor each year. If you know an eligible student who is interested, you may contact my office or visit the following website: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/hadm/pageform.htm>